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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Letter dated 2 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an appeal to the peoples of the world, States, parliaments and international organizations by the inhabitants of the town of Khojaly on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the genocide in Khojaly.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and the above-mentioned information* as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under item 9 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Sima Eivazova
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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* The annex is reproduced in English and Russian only.

Annex

APPEAL

from the inhabitants of the district of Khojaly to the peoples of the world, States, parliaments and international organizations

To the human tragedies of Khatyn, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Song My, reckoned as the most monstrous events of the twentieth century, was added on 26 February 1992 the Khojaly genocide.

On the night of 25 to 26 February 1992 the armed forces of Armenia, with the active participation of the 366th regiment of the former USSR, at that time stationed in the town of Hankendi, took by storm the town of Khojaly, whose population totalled 7,000 inhabitants. For the previous four months the town had been invested on all sides by the armed forces of Armenia, so that the population were experiencing major difficulties in obtaining medical supplies and food. There were in the town many sick, wounded and elderly persons, as well as women and children.

On that night frenzied Armenian bandits with the support of foreign mercenaries razed the town of Khojaly to the ground. With the help of the extensive heavy military equipment resources of the 366th regiment the town was completely demolished and burnt. No pity was shown to the peaceful civilian population - children, women, old people and the sick were bestially slaughtered. The Khojaly nightmare was a crime of genocide perpetrated by the Armenians against the Azerbaijani people. The aim of the brutal butchers was the total annihilation of the town's population. By a lucky chance, however, many of Khojaly's inhabitants survived to bear witness to the event.

As in previous years we, witnesses left alive by a miracle at the time of the Khojaly genocide, are appealing with high hopes to all the progressive forces of mankind and to the competent international organizations in order to draw once again to the attention of the international community the importance of a political and legal assessment of this historic crime.

In the genocide perpetrated by the Armenians against the Azerbaijani people 613 persons were killed and 1,275 peaceful inhabitants taken hostage. The fate of 150 persons remains unknown to this day. In the course of the tragedy 487 peaceful inhabitants were more or less severely maimed. Among those killed were 106 women and 83 young children. The maimed included 76 children not yet of age.

As a result of this war crime, carried out with particular cruelty by Armenian bandit units, 6 families were completely wiped out, 26 children lost both parents, and 130 children one of their parents. Of those who perished, 56 persons were killed with especial cruelty: by burning alive, scalping, beheading, gouging out of eyes, and bayoneting of pregnant women in the abdomen. These inhuman acts were committed in the face of all mankind at the end of the twentieth century by a people that claims to be "cultured" and "wronged".

The policy of unfounded territorial claims and ethnic cleansing conducted by Armenia against Azerbaijan did not end with the Khojaly genocide. Supported and encouraged by partisans from abroad, they have occupied 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan and expelled over a million Azerbaijanis from their immemorial historical lands.

We refugees from Khojaly have already now for the past seven years been appealing to all peace-loving, progressive, advanced international unions, associations and organizations. We appeal to you with aching hearts but also with high hopes. We implore you not to show lack of concern and indifference towards the sufferings and grief visited upon us as a result of Armenia's armed aggression. We do not believe that the competent international organizations and powerful peace-loving States cannot compel Armenia to respect law and order.

It is our hope that the world community will condemn Armenia's armed aggression against Azerbaijan, express from the standpoint of the rules of international law its categorical and unequivocal opinion regarding Russia's supplying modern weapons of mass destruction to Armenia, and assist in the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the return of over a million refugees to their own homes. The President of the Azerbaijani Republic, G.A. Alief, consistently declares at all international events and meetings that we advocate peaceful settlement of problems, as all our actions demonstrate. We believe that the world community and the international organizations will take effective measures for the realization of the noble intentions of the President of Azerbaijan.

The people of Khojaly, who have lived through one of the most nightmarish tragedies of the twentieth century, call upon the peoples of the world to unite in the struggle for peace and tranquillity. We, the living witnesses to the Khojaly genocide, looking anxiously towards all the international organizations and to peace-loving, responsible States, appeal for a mobilization of efforts to put an end to wars and begin striving for a happy community of humankind in which there would be no war, development would progress and well-being would flourish.

Baku, 18 February 1999